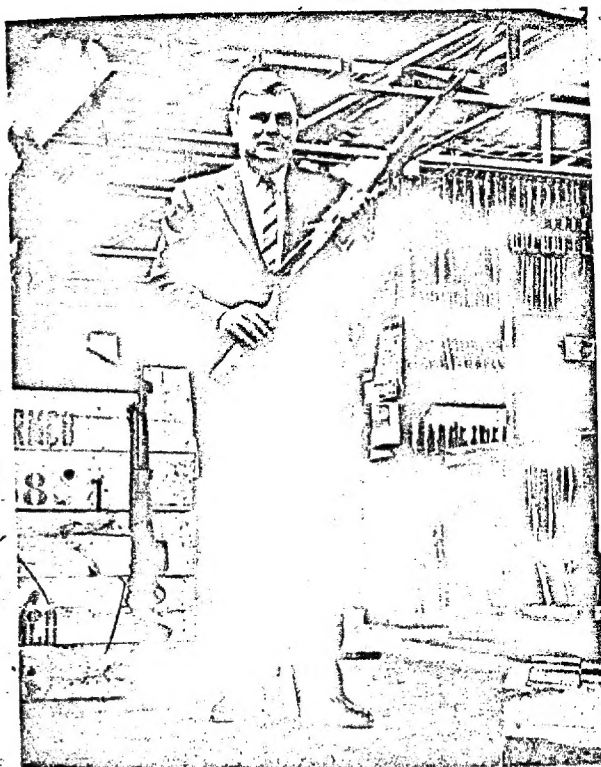


Samuel Cummings Dates Human Affairs B.G. and A.G. Arms Merchant To the World

CUMMINGS,
SAMUEL

By SANCHE de GRAMONT



Cummings, who makes the most of living After Gunpowder, in the Alexandria, Va., warehouse of his firm, Interarmco (brochure below); its offers include "equipping an entire army."

SAMUEL CUMMINGS is the largest private arms dealer in the world. He concedes that selling guns is different from selling encyclopedias or Fuller brushes. The primary function of a gun is to kill. When the National Rifle Association tells us that there are proportionately far more traffic deaths than gunshot deaths per year in the United States, so that if you are going to outlaw the free sale of guns you might as well outlaw the free sale of cars, the obvious reply is that, unless the people in Detroit are more malevolent than anyone thought, homicide is not the primary function of the automobile. But does a salesman have moral

control over his product? Is it the pharmacist's fault if the little old lady with the flowered hat spikes her husband's breakfast cereal with sulfuric acid? Are distillers responsible for drunks? Are gun dealers to blame for wars, murders and hunting accidents?

And yet guns are different because they are by definition lethal and because the armaments business has a tarnished past. Thus, according to publications like *Der Spiegel*, *Pravda* and the *Journal de Genève*, Sam Cummings has inherited the mantle of the sinister Sir Basil Zaharoff (1850-1936), the arms dealer for whom the terms "peddler of death" and "devil's smithy" were coined. Sir Basil sold arms to both sides in the Boer War, and used bribery and graft to play Turkey off against Greece so that they built up their respective armies until there was

nothing left to do but make war. He not only supplied the arms race, he was instrumental in creating it. "Millions died that he might thrive" is one popular summary of his life.

ASIDE from the fact that both men chose Monte Carlo as their place of residence, there is not much resemblance between the bearded, Svengali-like Zaharoff and Cummings, the prototype of the jolly fat man, who is about as sinister as Santa Claus and likes nothing better than to make sardonic jokes about the peculiarities of his profession. Today, Cummings points out, since 99 per cent of the world's armaments are sold by governments, private merchants are no longer the manipulators of policy, but merely its agents. The sordid mercantilism and political intrigues of Zaharoff, Krupp, Vickers and the other pre-World War I munitions

giants no longer are characteristic of the private-arms field.

Cummings seems rather to have inherited what might be called the Rhett Butler mentality. As the dashing but pragmatic Civil War blockade runner put it: "What most people don't seem to realize is that there is just as much money to be made out of the wreckage of a civilization as from the upbuilding of one." Rhett Butler sold Confederate cotton to England and brought back guns for the rebels, disclaiming patriotic involvement. His philosophy was free enterprise, right or wrong, and he insisted that "blockading is a business with me and I'm making money out of it. When I stop making money out of it, I'll quit."

In the same manner, although his business is strictly legal, weapons have made the 40-year-old Cummings

SANCHE de GRAMONT, a Paris-based freelance, is author of "The Secret War," about espionage, and a forthcoming study of the French *ancien régime*, "Epitaph for Kings."

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INTERARMCO

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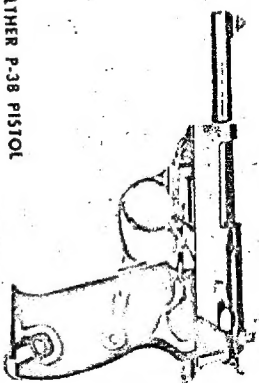
INTERARMCO, during the past decade has supplied numerous nations throughout the world with major quantities of small arms and ordnance ranging from the latest in lightweight automatic weapons to equipped tanks and jet aircraft.

INTERARMCO also furnishes technical experts and equipment to nations desirous of modernizing their weaponry, or converting to standard NATO, U. S., or other calibers.

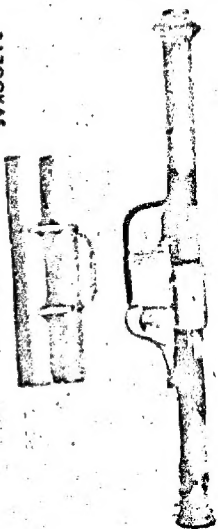
INTERARMCO, through its expert global purchasing teams, is in a unique position to supply required military equipment of virtually any type. By taking surplus, obsolete or "scrap" arms material in trade, or purchasing it outright for cash, INTERARMCO can assure its customers of lowest possible prices for new or reconditioned equipment.

INTERARMCO's prices, lower because of volume selling and purchasing in the world market, are only a fraction of present day production or "market" costs for similar items. In addition to new and re-manufactured pistols, rifles, sub, light and heavy machine guns of all types, INTERARMCO can offer an excellent selection of mortars, artillery, tanks, aircraft and other heavy weapons upon application.

All transactions of this type are made under specific authorization of the U. S. State Department, Office of Munitions Control, and/or the War Office, London.



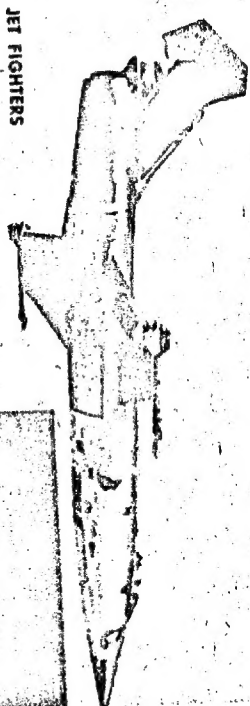
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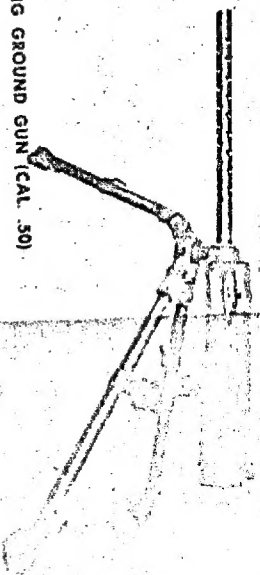
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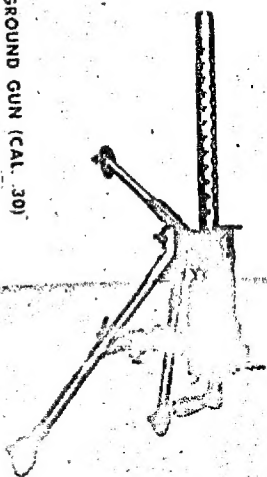
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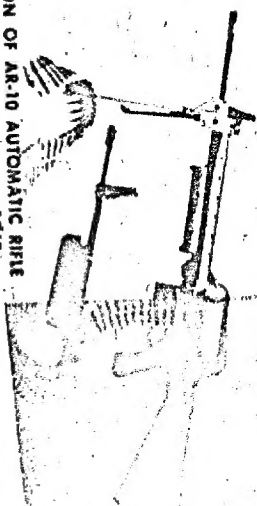
JET FIGHTERS



BROWNING GROUND GUN (CAL. .50)

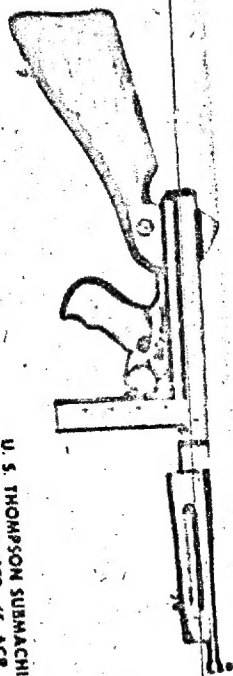


BROWNING GROUND GUN (CAL. .30)



MG VERSION OF AR-10 AUTOMATIC RIFLE

Continued



U. S. THOMPSON SUBMACHINE GUN
CALIBER .45 ACP



FINNISH M60 CARBINE
CALIBER 7.62MM M43
The most versatile all-purpose infantry
shoulder-weapon, available exclusively
thru INTERARMCO.



DANISH "MADSEN" SMG
CALIBER 9MM PARABELLUM



SWEDISH "CARL GUSTAV" SMG
CALIBER 9MM PARABELLUM



30 CALIBER ARMALITE AR-10 RIFLE
WITH SCOPE MOUNT ATTACHMENT
7.62MM NATO

INTERARMCO

fulfills the weapon needs of

POLICE DEPARTMENTS

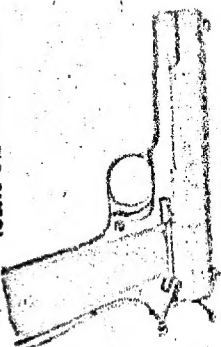
INTERARMCO, through its worldwide purchasing facilities, offers the latest in police armament at a substantial saving to American and foreign law-enforcement agencies.

Currently in stock are the precision made Carl Gustav and Madsen submachine guns, of the most modern type. Both weapons are of the latest lightweight design and come equipped with folding shoulder stocks for convenient storage in police vehicles.

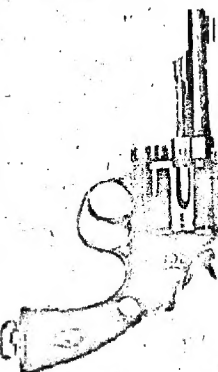
The .45 caliber Thompson submachine gun, in both military and commercial models, is also available to authorized police agencies at a surprisingly low cost.

INTERARMCO also has available the sensational new Armalite AR-10 in .30 caliber. This weapon combines the precision of a high power rifle with the additional capabilities of full automatic fire for emergency use. Quick takedown and rugged dependability make the AR-10 "a natural" for police service.

Whatever the size or requirements of your department, INTERARMCO can meet your weapon needs efficiently and at the lowest cost. Write on department stationery for further information.



COST .45 SEMI-AUTOMATIC PISTOL



S&W .38 REVOLVER

4

a millionaire, and he is ready to sell anything from a hunting knife to a jet fighter to any nation able to afford it. Half of his worldwide business consists of selling light arms (up to 20 millimeters) on the American and Commonwealth markets. The other half involves acting as broker for international arms deals. He benefits from conflagrations, for either the belligerents are fighting with his weapons, or one side will eventually have surplus armament to dispose of.

He is currently negotiating with the Israeli Government to purchase Soviet light arms captured in the six-day war. Cummings sees no harm in profiting from what he calls "our era's treadmill to oblivion." He believes that "arms are the symbol of man's folly throughout the ages. That's what civilization was, is, and

66Cummings benefits from military conflagrations, for either the belligerents are fighting with his weapons, or one side will eventually have surplus arms to sell.99

always will be: 'Open up! Let 'em have it!' That's why this is the only business that should last forever."

"I should laugh diabolically and put on my Dr. Faustus mask," Cummings said when I asked him about the merchant-of-death image. "But I simply point to our license file—we do less than 1 per cent of the United States Government's business and we have Government approval of every deal."

SINCE 1957, the Pentagon has been conducting arms sales through an innocuous-sounding agency known as International Logistics Negotiations, which supplies its NATO partners and 24 other countries with a complete range of weapons. The Government's three main reasons for taking a major share of the armaments market seem to be: To offset the balance-of-payments deficit created by United States military expenditures abroad; to boost employment at home and profits for American industries; and the belief that it is healthier for allies who can afford it to pay for their own defense.

Henry J. Kuss Jr., the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense in

charge of arms sales, proudly explains American leadership in the arms field by saying that "no other nation can touch us in over-all technological know-how, quality, price, delivery time, follow-up logistical support and credit terms." From \$600-million in fiscal 1961, Mr. Kuss and his 21-man sales force increased weapons sales to \$1.93-billion in fiscal 1963.

Cummings declines to qualify his annual sales figure in more specific terms than "in eight figures" and "under \$100-million." He is able to compete with the United States Government because he cuts prices and, as he says, "a small company can give quick, efficient service." For instance, the Government is still selling World War II Browning .50-caliber machine guns at \$750 each, the cost of manufacture. Cummings, who buys Brownings as surplus from governments stocking more modern equipment, reconditions them and sells them at \$265. "We can give these savings right through the weapons spectrum," he says. "For instance, we are offering United States tanks at a far lower cost than the Government."

He owns more than 100,000 square feet of warehouses on the banks of the Potomac in Alexandria, Va., which are stocked with 50,000 pistols, 10,000 machine guns, 600,000 rifles and 100 million cartridges. There are 300,000 more assorted weapons neatly stacked in his London warehouses. He has 200 employees, 17 affiliates and subsidiaries, and agents around the world who keep him informed about possible arms deals. Many of these are retired generals or high civil servants with entrees to their governments; until recently his agent in Indonesia was President Sukarno's cousin.

CUMMINGS works out of a 14-room apartment in Monaco, 10 rooms of which serve as the residence for himself, his blonde, Swiss-born wife Irma, and his 5-year-old tow-headed twin daughters. His office is decorated with an 18th-century English two-pounder, a 16th-century German suit of armor, a large map of the world (courtesy of the United States Army map service) and photographs of artillery being unloaded from boat decks in a Latin American harbor onto rail cars, with smiling generals in the background.

Cummings prohibits the use of Telex between his many branches, for he says he would "just be broadcasting my moves to the competition." He discourages interoffice telephone calls, and uses a number code in his business correspondence to designate countries and types of armament. This coded files contain the military secrets of rival nations,

so that he has to maintain James Bond-like security.

Every foreign sale Cummings makes depends on licensing from the State Department or, if Commonwealth countries are involved, the British War Office. "In a strict legal sense there's nothing they could do if I went ahead without their OK," he says, "but practically it would be extremely unwise. I have \$10-million worth of installations in the United States and I depend on the goodwill of the Government. Any manufacturer of whisky could sell bootleg to his chums after hours, but would it really pay Calvert to do that?"

"Our biggest headache is getting policy from the State Department. I was recently approached by a Latin-American country for the delivery of 50 light American M-41 tanks. These are good tanks which NATO considers obsolescent, so that NATO nations want to unload them. I made a detailed proposition to the Minister of Defense of that country, subject to United States approval. I have the NATO power's approval for the sale. But at State they've been stalling since June.

"Meanwhile, the same country has received a proposal from France, which offers facilities to assemble their new light tank, the AMX-30, in the country itself, and offers long-term, low-interest financing. If I don't close the deal by the end of the month I'll lose by default. The chance to supply a standard United States item to a Latin-American country which receives United States aid will be lost to France—the United States aid will be helping the French economy."

TO sell his staple—light arms—Cummings is on the road eight months a year. As a result, Spanish carabinieri, Yugoslav border police, Finnish army patrols and many other armed forces are carrying rifles sold by his company, Interarmco, or one of its affiliates.

Cummings is the sole private agent for the products of the Dutch, Swedish and Finnish national arms factories, and has an open-end agreement with Colt to sell its lightweight, rapid-fire ArmaLite rifle, the latest

Continued

model of which the Approved For Release 2003/12/02 : CIA-RDP75-00001R000300080001-6
are using in Vietnam. Colt, of course, favors its own retailers, but Cummings is able to find many markets for the Armalite thanks to his resourceful salesmanship.

He travels with an Armalite M-14 or M-16 neatly disassembled in a flat Fiberglas case lined with foam rubber, and thus far has had no trouble at customs. He also carries a magnet to test the quality of cartridge cases and a micrometer to measure the wear on gun bores of surplus weapons he might consider as trade-ins for new guns.

Arriving in a foreign capital, he calls up the Minister of Defense and says: "I'm here to demonstrate the best rifle in the world." If an important sale is involved, he may present the chief of state with a gold-plated pistol or some other memento. The prospective customers "are always interested," he says, "because everybody likes fireworks. I use tracer bullets. If you can see it, you believe it. I assemble the rifle to show how easy it is. I fire at normal targets at different ranges. I'm a pretty good shot, I get plenty of practice. Then for the grand finale I fill a few bean cans full of petrol—did you ever see a tracer bullet hit a bean can full of petrol? It's better than a John Wayne movie. This little demonstration never fails to elicit delightful Oh's and Ah's. I saddle up and ride into the sunset, leaving the firing range a smoldering ruin."

CUMMINGS has no qualms about supplying both sides in a conflict. "Any supplier of basic commodities sells to both sides," he says. "Coca-Cola sells to both Arabs and Israelis." When you are selling guns, however, the results can be embarrassing. Cuba's Fulgencio Batista had been one of Cummings's regular customers. When Fidel Castro overthrew him in 1959, Cummings kept supplying the new regime with Armalite rifles until the State Department stopped licensing weapons sales to Cuba.

was in the Dominican Republic demonstrating the Armalite to Trujillo. A group of Cuban-based guerrillas had just landed at Puerto Plata. General Kovacs, Trujillo's Hungarian-born military adviser, was examining a captured Cuban rifle on his desk when Cummings came in with Trujillo.

One word led to another,

and Cummings finally had to admit that it was he who had sold the captured rifle to Castro. "You know I wouldn't tell him to use it against you," Cummings blandly told Trujillo.

Cummings is also fully conscious that he sells arms to underdeveloped countries which are diverting hard currency from social reforms to buy them, and whose leaders are exponents of Goering's adage that "guns will make us powerful; butter will only make us fat."

"They think they must have the weapons to parade down the main boulevard on independence day," Cummings says, "and make the people think they are safer than they are as they shout, 'viva la libertad,' when what they should be shouting is, 'Adios libertad.' It's the same whether it's a people's democracy or an emerging nation. These are the empty passwords of our times. Emerging from what? The only word I know in Russian is 'skoro'—soon. How many times I have seen the obedient masses marching onward toward the promise of skoro."

"In the final analysis, the morality of armaments boils down to who makes the sale. I have to make them buy my model. The East bloc salesman comes to Egypt, slaps the admiral on the back, and presents him with a battleship he can't sail on a sea he doesn't own near a coast he can't approach."

SINCE Cummings has been in the arms business, he has noticed some progress, not in international morality, but in reducing international hypocrisy. "The sales pitch of arms dealers," he says, "used to stress offensives: 'If you buy these new machine guns you can blow those guys on

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the other side of the hill into the Stone Age.' This isn't considered polite any more. You need a defensive pitch: 'Unless you obtain this type of weapon you won't have fire superiority in case of aggression. You won't even make it out of your foxhole!' " Cummings eschews the expression "A bigger bang for a buck."

Even with the defensive approach, Cummings is a convincing enough salesman to have, on one occasion, badly frightened a Central-American dictator (name withheld because he is still a Cummings client). "I'm well protected,"

the dictator had told Cummings, "I have all I need."

"It's common knowledge that each morning you sit in front of the same picture window in your national palace," replied Cummings ominously. "All I need is a piston-engine plane armed with eight 50-mm. machine guns. I'd come in low and blast you through the window."

"Another thing—I wasn't even frisked when I came in here. How do you know I can't send you to kingdom come with what I've got in this attaché case?" Cummings reached for the case, but a nervous bodyguard intercepted him at gunpoint. "You know what the sea captain in 'The Bridge of San Luis Rey' said," comments Cummings, "all so fake, Esteban."

A LIFETIME of studying and selling weapons has made Cummings skeptical about human progress, which he tends to see in terms of the era B.G. and A.G.—before and after gunpowder. He was raised on Philadelphia's Main Line. His stockbroker father was wiped out on Black Friday and became the manager of an electrical supply store. He died

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Continued

when Sam was 8, and his widow went into real estate business.

that she could send her son to the exclusive Episcopal Academy there. Cummings later adopted the school motto, "Esse Quam Videri" ("To Be Rather Than Seem"), for his company.

He became what he calls "a gun nut" at the age of 5 when an American Legion post gave him a rusted World War I Maxim machine gun, which he learned to assemble. He started a gun collection, and by the time he was in his late teens he knew as much about light arms as a master armorer.

He was drafted in 1945, and at close-order drill on the first day of basic training he handled his rifle with such professional ease that the sergeant, his face one inch from Cummings's, roared: "You've been in the Army before!"

Cummings missed the shooting war, but in 1948, with the fervor of a Renaissance art scholar on his first visit to Tuscan museums, he toured Europe to see the battle sites. In Normandy's Falaise Gap, in the Ardennes and in Western Germany, Cummings saw fields that looked as though they had been planted with tanks and heavy artillery. It was like finding pirate treasure. "The cartridge belts were still on the machine guns," he recalls. "The tanks had that new-car smell. All they needed was a battery recharge to start 'em up and reconquer France."

He was distraught at the sight of this fine material going to waste. "In Scandinavia, it was a tragedy," he says. "They took all the German arms and dumped them into the sea."

FOLLOWING his grand tour, Cummings was graduated from George Washington University and served briefly as a clerk in the C.I.A., during the Korean war. He was put to work identifying North Korean weapons from photographs. Not unexpectedly, they were Russian. But the vision of arms-strewn European fields still haunted him, and he joined a small West Coast arms firm on a salary-plus-commission basis. Within two years, he had saved \$25,000 to start his own

business. His first innovation was the purchase of large quantities of surplus light arms in Europe to sell on the American market. Cummings knew that the basis for every fine bolt-action sporting rifle is the German Mauser. He also knew

that several European countries were overstocked with Mausers. They were the wrong caliber for NATO standardization, and cost money to maintain and store. They even cost money to throw away. Finally, Cummings had faith in the United States gun market. He estimates that there are 50 million armed American civilians, including 24 million registered hunters, many millions of unregistered hunters, collectors, veterans and other types of "gun-nuts."

"Let's face it," he says, "the gun made this country. It's the frontier

tradition, the musket over the fireplace, the man at the end of the Concord bridge. The gun's part of the language—'Keep your powder dry,' 'Lock, stock and barrel,' 'Flash in the pan.' I used to visit local gunshops at the start of the hunting season on Saturday morning, and watch one of these guys come in. He'd pick a Mauser out of the rack, put down a \$20 bill, and his eyes would sort of glaze over, and you could see him thinking: 'Let 'em come, I'm ready!'"

Cummings bought out the entire stock of surplus light arms from several European countries, including hundreds of thousands of what he calls "arsenal-fresh Mausers, with Hitler's fingerprints still on them." He sometimes got them for as low as 10 per cent of cost, which allowed him to offer substantial bargains on the American market. He also did the rounds of Washington's military attachés to ferret out unwanted surplus.

GRADUALLY Cummings built up his domestic market to the point where he now sells 250,000 firearms a year in the United States and 80,000 more in the Commonwealth. He bought out two famous English gunmakers, Grant and Lang and E. J. Churchill, and has increased production while maintaining their line of handmade shotguns that sell for \$2,000 each. He is the only non-English member of a tight-knit con-

Approved For Release 2003/12/02 : CIA-RDP75-00001R000300080001-6
66When Cummings was trying to sell arms to Trujillo, he had to admit he had sold Castro a rifle that the Dominican Republic had just seized from Cuban raiders. 'You know I wouldn't tell him to use it against you,'

Cummings told Trujillo blandly.99

frerie called The Worshipful Company of Gunmakers, which confers obscure privileges, such as the right to ride in the Thames barge procession on coronation day.

In Finland, Cummings bought all the leftover weapons from the Russo-Finnish winter war, ranging from captured Cossack sabers to 20-millimeter Finnish antitank guns, too light to pierce Russian armor. The Finns had fired them at the vision slits of Russian bunkers in Karelia.

Cummings is amused at the uses customers have found for the antitank guns. Some were sold to laboratories testing armor plate. Others went to a whale cooperative in Alaska, located near a spot where the whales come too close to shore for their own good. Cummings throws back his head and roars with laughter at the thought: "When the whale yawns, he swallows that red-hot slug—Gulp!"

An Arizona dentist who bought an antitank gun to shoot rabbits reported: "I don't hit many, but when I do—Oh, man!"

Anti-Castro raiders used the Finnish 20-millimeter to shoot up fuel dumps near Havana. Ignoring the fact that the weapon does not fire explosive shells, they only managed to spring a few leaks in the storage tanks.

Retailers who carry the antitank guns (Cummings neither manufactures nor retails weapons—except for his line of fine hunting rifles in Great Britain) ran humorous ads in the National Rifle Association magazine, "The Rifleman": "Always try for an eye-shot at the charging rhinoceros."

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ABOUT this time Cummings also began to go after the big orders. In 1956 he sold 26 Swedish Vampire jets to Trujillo for \$3.5-million. His biggest single deal, \$20-million worth of arms, involved three countries and took a year and a half to negotiate.

Always wary of the competition, Cummings does not like to go into the details of his important brokerage deals. However, he does puncture the notion that arms dealers make huge profits. His own average profit margin, he says, ranges from 9 per cent to 12 per cent. On one recent deal he obtained a supply of new Belgian rifles from West Germany. They cost \$125 apiece at the factory, but he

bought them as surplus for \$35 each. It costs \$7 per rifle for overhauling, and he sells them at \$50, for a gross profit of nearly 20 per cent.

Cummings is disdainful of the U.S. Government arms salesmen who are able to conclude much more important deals with a single telephone call. "Kuss doesn't know what a commercial operation is," he says. "He has the whole department of Defense behind him. All he has to do is answer the phone."

The arms race between the two great power blocs helps Cummings thrive, for it makes perfectly good NATO weapons obsolete the moment Russian matériel improves. In 1970, Cummings is expecting 4,000 M-47

U.S. tanks to come up for sale in NATO countries. "It's first-class goods," he says, "never used except on short maneuvers. It's just what the rest of the world doesn't need but must have for their own useless maneuvers."

AT a hearing last April 13, Cummings tried to convey some of the absurdities of the arms business to Senators on the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, chaired by Senator Stuart Symington. The mere fact that the United States tries to match Soviet arms deliveries, Cummings said, "will encourage the Soviet Union to put its thumb on the scales and throw it out of kilter. Look at Afghanistan. . . . We give the Afghans some airfields and a beautiful highway, and the Russians rush in with an armored division, and then we give them, I think, some aircraft, and it goes on and on. A case of 'Can you top this?' There is no end to it."

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66 'The sales pitch of arms dealers,' says Cummings, 'used to be: If you buy these new guns you can blow those guys on the other side of the hill into the Stone Age. But this isn't considered polite any more.' 99

The Senators were particularly concerned about 90 U.S. F-86 jet fighters West Germany had sold to Iran, which was acting as a clearinghouse for Pakistan. A NATO embargo on weapons sales to either India or Pakistan had been circumvented, thanks to the device of using Iran as a cover. The planes had been sold through a private German broker, but

had been flown to Iran by *Luftwaffe* pilots in civilian clothes. The so-called end-use agreement, by which the United States exercises a veto on the resale of its military equipment, had been disregarded.

The Senators, who had just heard details of this questionable transaction for the first time, were dismayed to learn from Cummings that it was common knowledge in European government and military circles. "There are wonderful regulations and pronouncements of policy," said Cummings, "but the plainest print cannot be read through a gold eagle."

"Well," said Senator Symington, "that is quite an observation."

CUMMINGS sees the arms business as a series of hopeless contradictions. The West Germans are glutted with arms they don't need, and Chancellor Kiesinger is urged to buy more weapons each time he comes to Washington. And the Senators are surprised because the Germans try to unload some of their excess hardware on the Pakistanis. The Soviet Union, to take another example, is the champion of emerging nations but sells arms to South Africa. The United States, probably the most vocal nation in the world when it comes to disarmament, is also the world's biggest salesman of modern weapons.

As a man whose business depends on such anomalies, Cummings is fond of commenting on the futility of life, and adds: "Fortunately, as the old sea captain said, 'It's not for long, Esteban.'"

On the subject of disarmament, Cummings believes with Plato that 'only the dead have known the end of war.'

"Disarmament," Cummings says, "will never happen." One of the few disarmament goals ever achieved—the banning of the dum dum bullet—came about, he argues, because of a development in weaponry: New high-velocity rifles could not take a soft-nosed bullet.

He is less sanguine about proposed laws to curtail the sale and distribution of firearms in the United States, which would cut into his domestic market, and he echoes the

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standard arguments of the National Rifle Association. The Dodd bill, which would prohibit the mail-order purchase of light arms, "penalizes the honest sportsman and the law-abiding collector. The misuse of weapons should be penalized, rather than have a law which prevents John Jones, deer hunter in upper Nebraska, from carrying cartridges in his car across the state line."

At the drop of a grain of powder, Cummings will quote Article Two of the Bill of Rights, which states that, "a well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

But Cummings's most novel contribution to the "right-to-bear-arms"

His remarks went unrecorded as did Cummings's private opinion that, "if I was a Marine in Vietnam and was given one of those new Arma-lites, I'd throw it away and say I'd lost it and try to get one of the Russian rifles off a dead V.C. They're the best."—S. de G.

controversy is a proposal for compulsory gun ownership in the United States, because "armed civilians are the measure of a democracy's strength." He admires Switzerland, where every man up to the age of 50 must keep either a loaded rifle or pistol in his home and attend annual target practice.

"You don't have much armed robbery with every home armed to the teeth," says Cummings. He argues that if guns were illegal, the honest man would be disarmed but the criminals and the lunatic fringe would continue to find contraband arms. He believes that the deranged student in the Texas tower would have done far less damage if swift answering fire had made him take cover, and that Lee Harvey Oswald, had he been unable to buy a cheap Italian carbine, would have tried to kill President Kennedy "with a Cossack saber."

CUMMINGS is as abstemious as a seminarian—he neither smokes nor drinks, and the strongest word that passes his lips is "Gosh." He is also frugal, confessing to a Puritan streak. The apartments he keeps up in Washington, London and Monaco are mainly for business purposes. His Swiss chalet is comfortable but unpretentious.

He drives an old Opel station wagon, whereas the head of his London office owns a fleet of six sports cars. Mentioning a friend who came to see him in Monaco aboard his private yacht with a crew of 14, Cummings says with a grimace, "You become a slave to that." His only

self-indulgences are good food and a collection of 1,000 antique weapons, including early flintlocks and wheellocks that would fetch up to \$30,000 apiece in today's gun market.

Early last August, Cummings was sipping ginger ale on the flagstone terrace of his Swiss chalet, perched in the clean Alpine air near the lake of Geneva 3,600 feet above sea level. Above, a plane towed a red glider across a cloudless sky. Cummings was reading over his July sales figures, and expressed surprise that, despite the Negro riots, there had been no increase in his U.S. sales. "You'd think our business would be a barometer for that kind of thing," he said. "But it's the quiet time of year, before the hunting season opens."

After 15 highly successful years in the gun business, Cummings is quieting down himself. Since the Kennedy tax reform affecting Americans who live abroad, Monaco is no longer a tax haven, but "just another nice place to live." Cummings is in the 80 per cent bracket, and swears he'd be "better off staring at the mountains than working."

Perhaps for that reason, or perhaps because he is mellowing into a moralist, Cummings has dropped the hard sell in favor of a philosophical, even fatherly attitude toward his clients. On occasion, he does his best to lose a sale. As he recently explained to a Southeast Asian strongman: "Now look, you don't really need 1,000 tanks. You have no aggressive plans. Your name isn't Erwin Rommel. Keep your rice crop to feed your starving peasants." ■

Ka-pow!

At a Senate hearing a few months ago, gun-dealer Samuel Cummings gave his candid opinion of the Arma-lite rifle, which he has successfully sold from Cuba to Kenya, and which, as the M-16, has been the subject of intense controversy concerning its performance in Vietnam. The testimony went this way:

Cummings: "I am not personally an enthusiast of it."

Symington: "In South Vietnam they are enthusiastic because of the weight."

Cummings: "The World War II carbine was a useless weapon. It was light. Everybody loved it because it was light, but it was a dog."

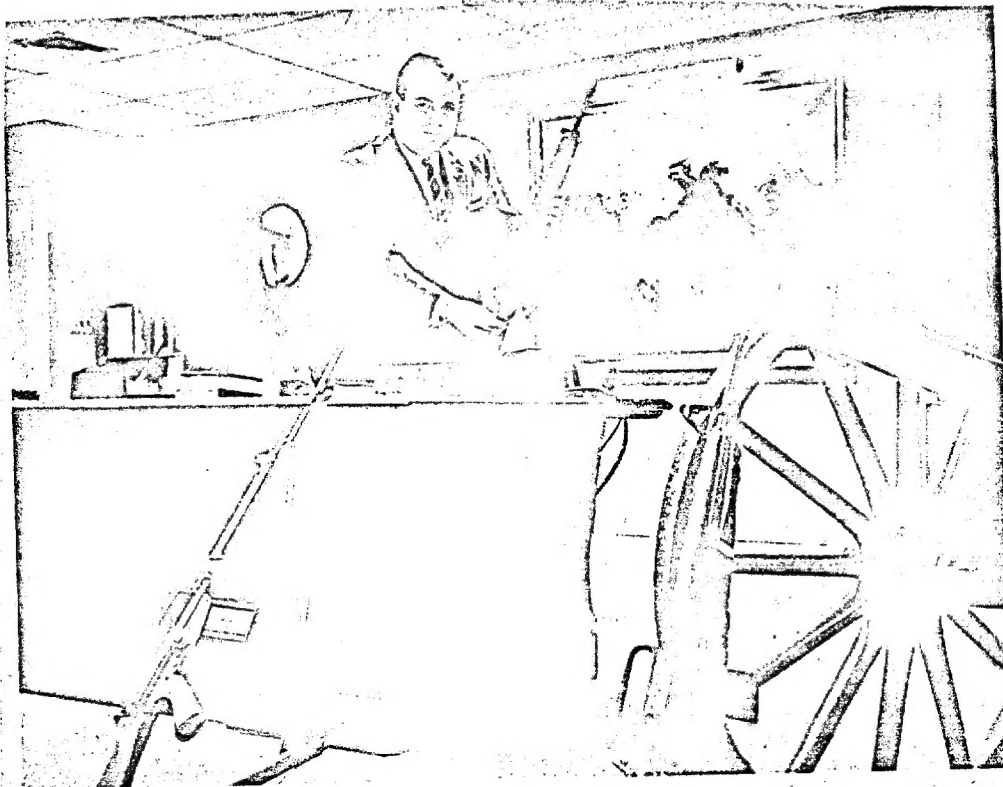
Symington: "Why was it a dog?"

Cummings: "Ballistically, you can have a hatful of cartridges in your stomach and still live long enough to blast the man who fired at you. It is as simple as that."

At this point, the anonymous recorder of the hearings, bent in concentration over his Stenotype machine, jumped up and said: "He's right; he's right. I was in the Battle of the Bulge and I shot a German six times with a carbine and he was still able to shoot me."

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Continued



ARMS AND THE MAN—Cummings in his Alexandria, Va., office. Half of his worldwide business consists of selling light arms (up to 20-mm.) on the American and Commonwealth markets. The other half involves acting as broker for international arms deals. Annual sales: "Under \$100-million."

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